

The Official SAT Online Course™

Case Studies

The following case studies describe successful implementations of *The Official SAT Online Course*™ at a broad range of schools across the country. As these case studies illustrate, the course is not only powerful and easy to use, it is also extremely flexible. It is used as an independent study tool, a classroom teaching aid, a test-preparation resource, and a component of core curricular studies in English and mathematics. In short, the course lends itself to a wide range of implementations. How you choose to implement it will depend on the needs, resources, and goals of your own school, your own staff, and your own students.

Best Practices

These case studies also illustrate a number of best practices that have proven useful under a wide variety of circumstances:

- **Advertise, advertise, advertise.** There are many ways to promote the course, from posting flyers on classroom walls to placing registration instructions on your school Web site. Use as many as you can. In the words of Ronnie Santorelli, guidance department chair at Housatonic Valley Regional High School, “The more people know about the course, the more they’ll use it.”
- **Enlist parents as allies.** Many students access the course from home. As a result, parents can be powerful advocates for encouraging its use. Reach out to parents through mailings, newsletters, and informational sessions. The more that parents know about the course, the more effectively they can promote it.
- **Ensure access.** Even if your school has a limited number of computers, try to ensure that students who lack home computers can regularly access the course—whether that means rotating student access to classroom computers or simply encouraging students to sign up for time in your school’s computer lab or media center.
- **Provide structure.** While the course is an ideal independent study tool, students often benefit from structure. Assigning specific course exercises, setting deadlines, and giving grades can all help motivate and focus students’ use of the course.
- **Defuse test day anxiety.** Take advantage of the course’s timed practice tests to give students a taste of what test day will be like. You can even assign segments of the tests, or individual essay prompts, under timed conditions. Students will be less anxious, and more confident, when they face the real thing.
- **Be flexible.** Several of the schools featured in these case studies began by using the course in one way (e.g., as an independent study tool), only to expand their implementations in order to take advantage of its many other uses (e.g., as a supplement to formal math and English curricula). As these case studies demonstrate, the course has a great deal to offer; by remaining open to new ways of using it, you too can best take advantage of its rich resources.

Learning from One Another

The schools in these case studies range from urban to rural, large to small. At some, computers are widely available. At others, computer access is limited. In each case, educators have tailored the course to suit their particular circumstances and to reach their particular goals. We hope that you will find their experiences useful in creating your own unique implementation of the course.

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The Official SAT Online Course™

Brookwood High School

School makes test preparation available to
all students, all the time

Overview

Brookwood High School had long provided limited after-school SAT® preparation to interested students for a fee. But when the Georgia Department of Education made *The Official SAT Online Course*™ available to all public high school students for free, Brookwood saw an opportunity to take its SAT preparation to a new level. The school lost little time in making the course a formal part of its classroom activities, and worked hard to make sure that faculty had the support they needed to make the most of this powerful resource.

Implementation

Brookwood quickly integrated *The Official SAT Online Course* into its curriculum, asking all math and language arts teachers to dedicate at least two days each semester to guided, in-class use of the course. But according to Cindy Westaway, co-chair of language arts at Brookwood, most teachers schedule additional computer lab time in order to have students work on particular lessons, quizzes, and essays. And many give similarly focused *SAT Online Course* homework assignments.

According to Banks Bitterman, Brookwood's assistant principal and testing coordinator, the key to Brookwood's successful implementation lay in providing hands-on training to the school's department heads. That experience helped them develop a clear idea of how they wanted to use the course, and allowed them to provide practical support to their teachers from the moment the program was first introduced.

Today, all of Brookwood's 3,250 students have 24-hour access to the course. The service is in high demand among teachers, and students make use of the course both at school and at home.

Demographics

Location	Snellville, GA
District	Gwinnett County School District
Enrollment	3,250
Grades Served	9–12
Minority Students	30 percent
College-Bound Seniors	85 percent

In Their Own Words

"We didn't just register students and leave it at that. Every class goes into the lab with a particular assignment: an essay, a critical reading exercise, a quiz."

"It's important to get all of your department heads on board. Ultimately, the teachers are the ones who will implement it."

"The beauty of online learning is that it's anytime learning. I know that my students use *The Official SAT Online Course* at home. And we know that parents are delighted."

The Official SAT Online Course™

Cambridge-South Dorchester High School

The Official SAT Online Course serves double duty as classroom teaching tool and independent study resource

Overview

Most classrooms at this midsize high school located near the beach resorts of Maryland's scenic Eastern Shore are equipped with only one computer, and there is but a single computer lab in the entire building. So when Principal Tom Gebert went shopping for a test-preparation resource, the anytime, anywhere availability of *The Official SAT Online Course*™ was extremely appealing. Now, thanks to the course, all of Cambridge-South Dorchester's students have access to college-preparation resources.

Implementation

In addition to making the course available to all students for independent study, the school decided to integrate the course into the test-preparation class that it had traditionally offered to interested juniors and seniors. English Teacher Barbara Bailey began the semester by having everyone take the course's official full-length pretest in order to establish a basic benchmark of their strengths and weaknesses. She then periodically assigned portions of practice tests to monitor students' progress, and had each student complete a full-length practice test halfway through the semester, and again at the very end, to gauge their overall improvement. Bailey assigned specific lesson quizzes from the course as homework, with students bringing their work into class the following day for evaluation. Most did their work either at home or on the computers in the school's media center.

To promote the course, Bailey gave a presentation to her fellow teachers during professional development day. As a result, an increasing number of teachers are using the course as a supplemental tool in their own classes. (Bailey herself plans to use the course's essay prompts in her honors English class, and believes

Demographics

Location	Cambridge, MD
District	Dorchester County Public Schools
Enrollment	950
Grades Served	9–12
Minority Students	47 percent
College-Bound Seniors	50 percent

that it will also provide useful additional practice for the state's own writing assessment.) In addition, positive word-of-mouth from the students in Bailey's test-preparation class has led to even greater independent use of the course, ensuring that more and more students at Cambridge-South Dorchester enjoy access to college-preparation materials—whether in class or on their own.

In Their Own Words

"The students loved using *The Official SAT Online Course*, and were really excited about visiting the Web site. It's accessible to them, and they can use it whenever they want—at home, at school, wherever. And in this day and age, students are more likely to use a computer-based course than a book."

"We were looking for an SAT® preparation course that kids could use at home. I tried it out myself, and I liked it."

"It's an excellent tool, an excellent teaching aid, and we've all benefited from it."

The Official SAT Online Course™

Amon Carter-Riverside High School

School makes latest college-preparation materials available to all students at fraction of cost

Overview

For Lee Felts, academic coordinator for Amon Carter-Riverside High School, the decision to make *The Official SAT Online Course*™ available to all Carter-Riverside students came down to three factors: quality, cost, and reliability.

Making rigorous college-preparation materials available to the entire student population was a high priority. The previous year, Carter-Riverside had offered a test-preparation class to a select group of 25 students. By switching to the course, the school was able to expand access to all students—at no extra cost.

Implementation

Both teachers and students were enthusiastic about adopting the course, especially since many Carter-Riverside students need extra help with their language skills. But computer resources at Carter-Riverside are limited: most classrooms have just one or two computers, and the school has a single dedicated computer lab containing 35 machines. So Felts gave teachers considerable leeway in deciding how to implement the course at the class level.

The result is a combination of teacher-led instruction and independent study. Teachers bring their students into the computer lab and have them complete a specific lesson in order to receive a grade for that day's class, but they also encourage students to log on to the course using the school's classroom computers in order to work on those areas in which they most need help. By taking a flexible and varied approach to implementation, the school has been able to get the most from its available resources while ensuring that all students reap the benefits of the course.

Demographics

Location	Fort Worth, TX
District	Fort Worth Ind. School District
Enrollment	977
Grades Served	9–12
Minority Students	87 percent
College-Bound Seniors	40 percent

In Their Own Words

“My goal was to increase the rigor on campus, exposing students to the highest level of testing they’ll encounter. We had looked at other products, but they were so expensive that we could only offer them to very few students. And with the recent changes to the SAT®, I wanted to get the most reliable information straight from the horse’s mouth.”

“The wonder of the program is it’s so easy to use. We brought every single English class into the computer lab, worked with every single kid to get them registered, walked the teachers through the program, and let them go from there.”

“The kids are engaged, and they’re working. Whenever they have time to use *The Official SAT Online Course*, they’re using it.”

The Official SAT Online Course™

Deep Run High School

The Official SAT Online Course and laptop computers make a powerful combination

Overview

When Deep Run High School switched from their old test-preparation software to *The Official Sat Online Course*™, the move was facilitated by a one-to-one computer initiative that put a laptop with wireless Internet access into the hands of every Deep Run teacher and student. But according to Technology Trainer Greg Metcalf, resources alone didn't explain the immediate popularity of the course. Careful planning, thoughtful integration, and robust teacher support had a lot to do with it, as well.

Implementation

In order to encourage course usage among juniors and seniors, Deep Run decided to integrate the course into its eleventh- and twelfth-grade English classes. First, Deep Run technology staff introduced the school's English teachers to the course. Then they made the course available to two "lead" classes before rolling out the full implementation.

Although 96 percent of Deep Run students have computers at home, the school emphasizes in-class use of the course. English Teacher Connie Fuller designed a curriculum for use across Henrico County that explains how to use the course in the classroom, and includes lesson plans and a timeline. At Deep Run, lesson quizzes are assigned for class credit, practice essays are treated as timed classroom activities, and students receive a "participation grade" for each assignment they complete—whether they do so in class, in the school's computer labs or library, or at home.

Metcalf credits the initial training provided to teachers, and the emphasis on deadline-driven assignments, with the school's successful implementation

Demographics

Location	Glen Allen, VA
District	Henrico County Public Schools
Enrollment	1,600
Grades Served	9–12
Minority Students	>15 percent
College-Bound Seniors	>85 percent

of *The Official SAT Online Course*. Today, 600 juniors and seniors have easy access to the course—and test-preparation strategies are formally embedded in the school's upper-level English courses.

In Their Own Words

"Students like doing things online. And *The Official SAT Online Course* provides a good feedback mechanism. The feedback comes to the child so quickly, and with the impartiality of a computer."

"Making students accountable is really important."

"We took several of our teachers' planning periods and walked them through *The Official SAT Online Course*. We gave them a bunch of training up front, encouraged use of the course at faculty meetings, and then did a test run with two classes."

"It's still face-to-face instruction, but another piece has been added."

The Official SAT Online Course™

Charles W. Flanagan High School

School integrates *The Official SAT Online Course* into formal curriculum, promotes independent use as well

Overview

Guidance Director Bob Frazier took a comprehensive approach in introducing *The Official SAT Online Course*™ to this high school in suburban Fort Lauderdale. Frazier has integrated the course into Flanagan's test-preparation class, and works with math and language arts teachers to make the course part of their formal curricula. He also strongly promotes independent use of the course outside of the classroom.

Implementation

Frazier immediately integrated *The Official SAT Online Course* into the school's preexisting, semester-long test-preparation classes. Test-preparation teachers at Charles W. Flanagan now supplement their classroom instruction with online lessons, quizzes, and practice tests.

But Frazier also assiduously promotes independent use of the course, whether at home, at the public library, or in one of the school's three computer labs. Using modified versions of the sample newsletter text available on the course Web site, he places announcements containing log-in information and descriptions of course benefits in the Counselor's Corner section of the school newspaper, and on its Web site. (Templates for newsletter inserts, promotional flyers, postcards, and letters to parents are all available for download. Just log in to the course, click on "Class Management," and then click on "Resources.") He sends similar information home to parents in their own newsletter, and talks about the course at monthly parents' seminars. When school counselors return students' PSAT/NMSQT® scores, they also take the opportunity to remind students about the course. And during his weekly school announcements, Frazier himself reminds students to pick up registration cards from the counseling office.

Demographics

Location	Pembroke Pines, FL
District	Broward County School District
Enrollment	3,150
Grades Served	9–12
Minority Students	70 percent
College-Bound Seniors	80 percent

Since every classroom at Charles W. Flanagan contains several computers, Frazier also encourages teachers to use the course as a supplemental tool in their classes. He is currently working with the math department to incorporate both the course and *The Official SAT Study Guide*™ into its formal curriculum.

Ultimately, it's the inherent flexibility of the course that makes such a wide range of approaches possible.

In Their Own Words

"The broad goal was to give students a different avenue of studying for the SAT® by using technology from home. We also want to have more of our kids taking honors and AP® classes, and the course will supplement that effort, as well."

"We use every possible vehicle we can as a communication tool."

"*The Official SAT Online Course* makes college preparation available to all students. Some don't have room in their schedules for a separate test-preparation class. But the course provides a wonderful opportunity for college preparation outside of the school, as well."

The Official SAT Online Course™

Housatonic Valley Regional High School

The Official SAT Online Course puts college-preparation resources at the fingertips of rural high school students

Overview

As guidance department chair at this small, rural high school, Ronnie Santorelli used to get calls from parents who wanted to supplement their children's SAT® preparation efforts. Many were looking for something beyond the limited, in-class sessions offered for a fee at the local continuing education center, but found that the only options were either too far away or too expensive. The solution? Simple: Purchase *The Official SAT Online Course*™ and give all Housatonic students the ability to access college-preparation materials anywhere, anytime.

Implementation

Santorelli wanted to provide a source of independent study materials to students whose classroom time was already dominated by existing curricular requirements and state assessments, and who couldn't travel to (or afford) a supplementary SAT preparation course. The key was to make students aware of the course, and to remind them of its availability at every turn.

Santorelli began by sending a letter about the course to every student's household. She followed up with a bulletin in the *Guidance Grapevine*, the school's guidance department newsletter, and posted another announcement on the guidance department's Web site along with basic registration information and a link to *The Official SAT Online Course*. (Templates for promotional flyers, newsletter inserts, postcards, and letters to parents are available for download. Just log in to the course, click on "Class Management," and then click on "Resources.")

But Santorelli didn't stop there. She sent an additional mailing about the course to the family of every student who took the PSAT/NMSQT®, and stapled *The Official SAT Online Course* registration

Demographics

Location	Falls Village, CT
District	Regional School District 01
Enrollment	619
Grades Served	9–12
Minority Students	4 percent
College-Bound Seniors	75 percent

cards to students' PSAT/NMSQT booklets before handing them back. She also talked to juniors about the course and its benefits during their fall developmental guidance sessions on college and career planning—something she plans to do again in the spring.

That kind of sustained promotion takes some planning, but it's worth it. Today, all Housatonic students have access to College Board preparatory materials—and they don't have to leave the house, let alone the town of Falls Village, to use them.

In Their Own Words

"Schools should advertise *The Official SAT Online Course* as much as possible. The more that people know about it, the more they'll use it."

"One of the main attractions of *The Official SAT Online Course* was that students would have the ability to use it from home for free."

The Official SAT Online Course™

Spring High School

School replaces fee-based classroom test preparation with flexible online program, finds promotion drives independent study

Overview

Up until last year, suburban Spring High School, located just north of Houston, Texas, offered a test-preparation workshop taught by school faculty. The class met just a few evenings a week, and students had to pay a fee to attend.

But according to Judy Jones, the school's lead counselor, all that changed when Spring implemented *The Official SAT Online Course*™. Now all students have access to college-preparation resources that can be tailored to suit their individual needs. Those resources are available anytime, anywhere. And students enjoy using them.

Implementation

Computer resources at Spring were limited, so the goal was to have students use the course on their own as an independent-study tool, whenever and wherever they could.

Even though their students use the course primarily at home, teachers continue to play a major role in encouraging them to take full advantage of the program.

English Teacher Mary Haney, for example, tries to bring each of her classes into the computer lab once a month or so to work on quizzes and practice tests. And several times a week, she'll throw *The Official SAT Question of the Day*™ in front of her students using her own classroom computer and projector.

Just as important, Haney prominently displays SAT® registration and test dates on her blackboard at all times, and plasters her homeroom with flyers promoting the use of the course. Those constant reminders make it clear to students that the course "is relevant to their lives," says Haney. As a result, "they're really interested in using it."

Demographics

Location	Spring, TX
District	Spring Independent School District
Enrollment	3,479
Grades Served	9–12
Minority Students	51.5 percent
College-Bound Seniors	86 percent

In Their Own Words

"I really appreciate that the kids have something they can work with at home and at school. *The Official SAT Online Course* can also be tailored to their particular strengths and weaknesses, and they prefer using the computer to using a book-based program."

"We really promote it, and we really feel that it's getting used a lot. Students and parents all love it."

"We gave all the necessary registration information to our juniors and seniors, and we really put the word out about *The Official SAT Online Course*. We keep registration cards in our career office, and we hold meetings with parents where we talk about it."

The Official SAT Online Course™

Oak Ridge High School

The Official SAT Online Course gives students the confidence they need to succeed

Overview

For Irma Maxwell, instructional coach at Oak Ridge High School in inner-city Orlando, Florida, *The Official SAT Online Course*™ is more than just a tool to help students prepare for the SAT®. It's a means of preparing them for the very idea of going to college. "We wanted the children to have the experience of the actual SAT. It's really neat that they can get instant feedback, and access *The Official SAT Online Course* away from school," Maxwell says. "But our ultimate goal is for them to realize that if they want to go to a four-year college or university, they can."

Implementation

Most students at Oak Ridge don't have home computers, so it was important to give them as many opportunities as possible to access the course in school. Oak Ridge began by offering the course to 350 students in its business education program, which has its own dedicated computer resources. Soon after, the school made the course available to all students, allowing them to access the course independently through computers in its media center. Oak Ridge also integrated the course into its preexisting test-preparation class, combining in-house, teacher-led test preparation with guided use of the course. In addition, language arts teachers schedule time for their classes in the school's computer labs so that they can supervise the completion of specific course assignments.

Oak Ridge publicizes the course in several different ways. Flyers are posted on message boards, and College Board posters are placed wherever there's heavy student traffic. (Templates for promotional flyers, newsletter inserts, postcards, and letters to parents are available for download. Just log in to the course, click on "Class Management," and then click on "Resources.") Television commercials advertising

Demographics

Location	Orlando, FL
District	Orange County School District
Enrollment	2,400
Grades Served	9–12
Minority Students	90 percent
College-Bound Seniors	25 percent

the course—starring students, and produced in the school's own television production studio—are shown on Oak Ridge's intraschool cable TV system. Teachers make regular announcements promoting the course, and school counselors remind students of the program during regularly scheduled orientation sessions and classroom visits.

Mounting that kind of multipronged promotional campaign takes a certain amount of planning and coordination. But for Maxwell, who has seen a steady rise in the number of Oak Ridge students taking the SAT, it's well worth the effort.

In Their Own Words

"Kids forget things, so we constantly give them reminders about *The Official SAT Online Course*."

"The beauty of *The Official SAT Online Course* is that when students take the real test, they're ready, and they're more relaxed. It's like the dress rehearsal before a play: it really cuts down on test anxiety, and it enhances their self-confidence—and their ability to succeed."

The Official SAT Online Course™

Wallington High School

School uses *The Official SAT Online Course* to bolster students' overall math and English skills

Overview

According to Dr. Joseph Pompeo, principal of Wallington High School, the need for better test preparation was only one of the factors that led his school to adopt *The Official SAT Online Course*™.

With less than 50 percent of students speaking English at home, supplementing the school's English curriculum was a top priority. Thanks to the course, the school is now able to make high-quality college-preparation resources available to all juniors and seniors, and plans to extend access to all grade levels.

Implementation

Wallington initially focused on making the course available to seniors who were preparing to take the SAT® in the fall. The school then had all juniors take the official full-length pretest in order to gather data on student strengths and weaknesses—data that allowed teachers to target particular skills through specific lesson assignments.

Prior to the introduction of the course, teachers like Stephanie Regetz who wanted to provide their students with college-preparation materials had to find and distribute them on their own. In her view, the course represents a significant step forward in making college-preparation resources available to all students.

For his part, Pompeo emphasizes the impact that the course can have on students' overall math and English skills when it's integrated into a school's formal academic plan.

Demographics

Location	Wallington, NJ
District	Wallington Public School District
Enrollment	575
Grades Served	9–12
Minority Students	17 percent
College-Bound Seniors	90 percent

In Their Own Words

"Since the College Board develops the test, I thought they'd be the best resource for test preparation. But my primary concern was to integrate *The Official SAT Online Course* into the instructional program as a means of improving math and English skills."

"*The Official SAT Online Course* is more than an add-on. My advice is to try to work it into the curriculum and the yearlong instructional program."

"I think it gives the students better access to a wide variety of questions, and I think they truly appreciate it. I'll even put *The Official SAT Question of the Day*™ up on the board, and we'll do it as a class."

"That students can access the course at home and on their own is clearly a benefit. And the fact that we can reach 100 percent of our students at no additional cost is a benefit to parents."

The Official SAT Online Course™

Willow Glen High School

School finds that promotion and outreach are key to boosting usage

Overview

As college and careers center technician for Willow Glen High School, it's no surprise that Louise Gill admires the advanced features and anytime, anywhere availability of *The Official SAT Online Course*™.

Gill also appreciates the cost-effectiveness of the course, which has allowed Willow Glen to make online college-preparation resources available to all grade levels at no extra cost to students. (Prior to adopting the course, Willow Glen offered students the option of taking a classroom test-preparation course for an additional fee.)

Implementation

When Willow Glen first purchased the course, the school intended to make it available to all students on a purely independent basis—both to help students prepare for the SAT®, and to improve their overall English and math skills. To encourage students to use the course, Gill immediately began advertising it through a variety of means: making classroom visits, holding informational evenings for parents, placing links to course-related information on the Willow Glen Web site, and posting College Board flyers throughout the school.

The publicity paid off. Students and parents alike began organizing course-related study groups. Soon after, teachers began volunteering to do the same. Gill gave classroom demonstrations to encourage teachers to use the course in class, as well, and ran registration sessions to help them get started. Today, an increasing number of teachers are integrating the course into their classes, with auto essay scoring and the official full-length pretest ranking among their favorite features.

Demographics

Location	San Jose, CA
District	San Jose Unified School District
Enrollment	1,300
Grades Served	9–12
Minority Students	72 percent
College-Bound Seniors	75–80 percent

In Their Own Words

"The flexibility is huge; students can use it at home, at school, wherever they have a computer. And it's very comprehensive, especially with the auto essay scoring feature."

"*The Official SAT Online Course* is very affordable. And one of the big selling points is that students can take a complete test online, and see how they would have scored, without having to pay extra for it."

"The best way to get people to use *The Official SAT Online Course* is to publicize it. You can't just buy it, mention it once in your morning announcements, and expect students to take advantage of it. You need to be proactive and talk about the course in order to encourage its use."